



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## FOREIGN AND INSULAR.

### CHINA.

#### *Information regarding the epidemic of plague in Hongkong during 1900.*

SIR: The Hongkong Government Gazette contains the admirable report of Dr. Francis W. Clark, medical officer of health for the colony, on the recent epidemic. Dr. Clark has kindly furnished me with charts showing the relation of rat mortality to the appearances of the disease among human beings, also charts showing the relation of temperature and rainfall to the rise and fall of the epidemic.

The total number of cases reported during the first ten months of the year was 1,082, with 1,034 deaths—a case mortality of 95.5 per cent. Of this number, 28 were non-Chinese, with 15 deaths. The non-Chinese cases comprised 6 Europeans, 5 Portuguese, 9 Indians, 7 Japanese, and 1 Filipino. Only 1 European died, and he had but recently entered the colony. Dr. Clark observes that “new arrivals from temperate climates are far more liable to contract the disease and to succumb than are residents of some standing.”

Two of the European cases are of special interest from the standpoint of maritime quarantine, having been imported into the colony by the Pacific and Occidental steamship *Coromandel*. The steamer lay at a dock in Bombay for ten days loading general cargo, including a quantity of rice and left for Hongkong April 10, arriving on April 28, and left the same day for Shanghai. She lay at the latter port for three weeks and again sailed for Hongkong. The following day, forty-one days after leaving Bombay and twenty-three days after leaving Hongkong, 2 European members of the crew developed bubonic fever. On the same day 2 dead rats were found in a storeroom close to their cabin and four days later 2 more dead rats were found in the infected cabin, presenting the appearance of having been dead for some time. This cabin was near the hold containing the rice, and it is pretty conclusively proved that the rats were infected by this grain, and that they in turn transmitted the infection to the officers.

These cases on the steamship *Coromandel* recalls the recent case which developed on the British steamship *Coptic*, at Kobe, Japan, on the outward voyage from San Francisco and over seven weeks after leaving Hongkong. While the steamer *Coptic* did not lie at a dock in this port, there are two ways in which the infection may have been carried aboard here—either by cargo transmitting the infection to the rats resident aboard the steamer, or by rats passing from lighters to the steamer. A great quantity of the cargo loaded at this port is carried direct from Canton, China, in “junks.” These junks are the homes of large numbers of the lowest class Chinese, and, when one considers the mortality among the harbor population, it presents the dangers which arise from the method of loading steamers by lighter.

Rats are no doubt present on these junks in large number and I have seen them even on “sam pans” which attend vessels in the harbor. The percentage of deaths among the female population has been less than in previous epidemics, being 31.7 per cent as compared with 35.8

per cent in 1898. Dr. Clark accounts for this in one of two ways—either that the female population is actually less or that the sanitary measures have given good results.

While a few cases occurred during the first three months of the year, the largest number occurred during the months of April, May, June, and July. The number of cases then rapidly decreased, until in October 13 cases and 13 deaths were reported, and in November 2 deaths. Four hundred and twelve of the cases were found in the street or floating in the harbor. Only yesterday (December 22) my attention was called to the body of a child lying on top of a buoy in the harbor.

The occupants of infected houses and junks use this method of disposing of their dead to avoid the usual disinfecting procedures. Because of this practice Dr. Clark says, "I fear that house-to-house visitation, with its attendant discomforts to the more respectable Chinese residents, must be pressed, or the alternative of a wholesale vacation of the houses in infected districts must be put in force." The report states that more than 43,000 rats were collected and burned, that only a small proportion of this number was killed by the Chinese for the sake of the 2 cents reward offered, and that although practically all these rats were handled by coolies engaged in sanitary work, yet only 3 cases of bubonic fever are known to have occurred among 400 men engaged in this work during the year.

One case of direct infection is cited. A man was bitten on the left thumb by a sick rat; the arm became swollen and death followed in ten days. At the necropsy two small wounds were found in the ball of the left thumb, the arm was swollen, and in the axilla was found an enlarged hemorrhagic gland surrounded by a brawny oedematous swelling. Bacteriologic preparations demonstrated the presence of plague bacilli. Several instances are cited where coolies engaged in loading junks have dropped into the harbor and drowned, and on bacteriological examination were found to present evidence of advanced plague infection. Dr. Clark states that "these are no doubt instances of the ambulatory type of the disease, and death probably resulted from syncope, the effect of shock upon a heart already weakened by fever."

By the chart "bubonic fever and mean atmospheric temperature" Dr. Clark shows that, as in former years, the epidemic abates in the colony as soon as the mean atmospheric temperature rises above 80° F.

During this year the temperature after rising to 82.6° F., fell for four weeks to below 80° F., and in consequence there was a slight recrudescence of the epidemic, the number of cases rising from 63 in the twenty-fifth week to 99 in the twenty-sixth and falling to 65 during the following week, and from that time on, with a mean temperature varying from 80° F. to 84° F., the epidemic rapidly declined.

"The chart bubonic fever and rainfall shows that the rainfall has some influence on the epidemic, thus in the twentieth week a heavy fall of rain is followed by a slight reduction in the number of cases in the twenty-fourth a heavy rainfall is followed by another slight reduction and in the twenty-sixth a further big rainfall is followed by the final decline of the epidemic."

The use of Haffkine's prophylactic has been limited and attended with practically no results. The Chinese resist the inoculations here as they have at our own ports. It is doubtful if even any of those connected with the sanitary work have availed themselves of its protection.

Cases continue to occur from time to time showing that the disease is only held in abeyance by unfavorable conditions which are unknown.

For the past six weeks the weather has been cool and pleasant, there has been practically no rain, and there are no mosquitoes at present, although in the summer they are very troublesome in certain districts of the city.

Respectfully,

JOHN W. KERR,  
*Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SURGEON-GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

*Report from Hongkong.*

HONGKONG, CHINA, *December 24, 1900.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith the report of inspection work at this station for the week ended December 22, 1900: The Asiatic crews and steerage passengers of 7 steamers were bathed and their personal effects disinfected by steam, 531 baths being given and 349 pieces of baggage being disinfected during the week. The steamship *China* was disinfected to kill rats.

Respectfully,

JOHN W. KERR,  
*Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SURGEON-GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

[Inclosure.]

*Report of vessels inspected at Hongkong, China, week ended December 22, 1900.*

Date.	Name of vessel.	Destination.	Crew.	Passengers.		Re-jected.
				Cabin.	Steer- age.	
Dec. 16	Am. str. Freda (a).....	Manila.....	12	0	0	0
Dec. 18	Br. str. Perla (b).....	do.....	72	16	35	1
Do.....	Fr. str. Vesper.....	Cebu, P. I.....	34	0	0	0
Do.....	Br. str. Sung Kiung (c).....	Manila, via Amoy.....	70	4	0	0
Dec. 19	Jap. str. Hongkong Maru (b).....	San Francisco.....	176	9	53	1
Do.....	Br. str. Kaifong (b).....	Cebu, P. I.....	66	5	5	0
Do.....	Am. str. Belgika (d).....	Manila.....	44	1	0	0
Dec. 22	Ger. str. Verona (e).....	New York.....	38	0	0	0
Do.....	Am. str. Freda (f).....	Manila.....	13	0	0	0
Do.....	Br. str. Carlyle City (g).....	San Diego.....	53	0	12	0

a Asiatic crew bathed and effects disinfected.

b Asiatic crew and steerage passengers bathed and effects disinfected by steam.

c Asiatic crew bathed and body clothing disinfected by steam.

d Asiatic crew bathed and effects disinfected by steam.

e Supplemental bill of health; crew not allowed ashore while in this port.

f Put back for repairs; crew not allowed ashore while in port.

g Asiatic crew and steerage passengers, and effects disinfected.

COLOMBIA.

*Report from Cartagena—Three deaths from yellow fever.*

CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA, *January 15, 1901.*

SIR: I inclose herewith the list of deaths occurring in this city up to and including the 13th instant. There are 3 reported cases of yellow fever. These were soldiers returned from the field. I am of the opinion that there is not much likelihood that this disease will spread in the town; and I also think it improbable that, unless more sick soldiers are brought in, there will be any considerable number of deaths from that cause in the immediate future. This season is considered the most